

The President's Daily Brief

5 July 1969

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

A major Soviet unmanned space launch toward the moon on 3 July ended in failure as a result of an explosion on the launch pad or an early inflight failure of the launch vehicle.

Deployment of Soviet recovery ships in the Indian Ocean indicated that the spacecraft was intended to return to earth.

[redacted] claimed that the USSR 50X1 would launch a rocket to the moon and bring back samples of lunar soil before the scheduled launch of the Apollo 11 mission. Whether this operation was intended to land on the moon and bring back samples cannot be established at this time, but it is within Soviet technical capabilities to attempt such a mission.

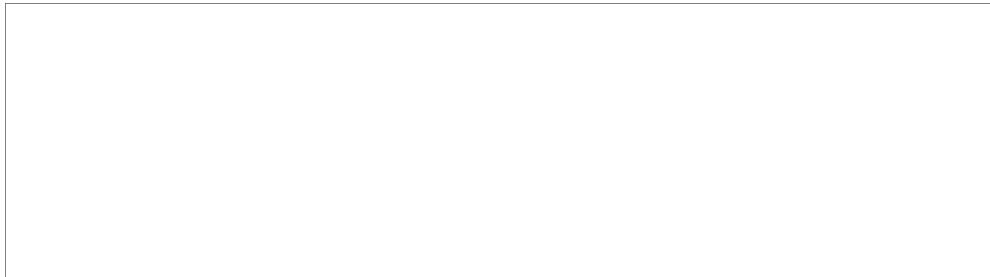
VIETNAM

Citing poor landing conditions, Hanoi turned back yesterday's ICC flight which might have brought out the three US prisoners whose release has been promised. The flight is reported to have been rescheduled for 8 July.

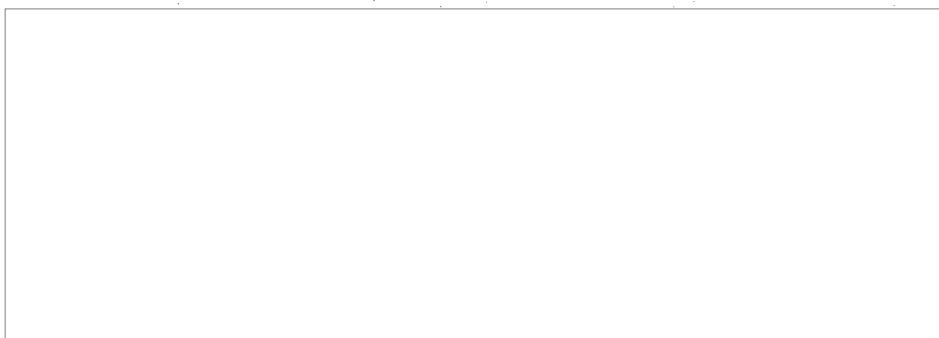
Hanoi could be planning to follow the previous pattern of turning the captives over to a peace group, thus delaying their departure even longer. Last year, the North Vietnamese also announced on 3 July an impending release of prisoners but did not permit their departure until early August.

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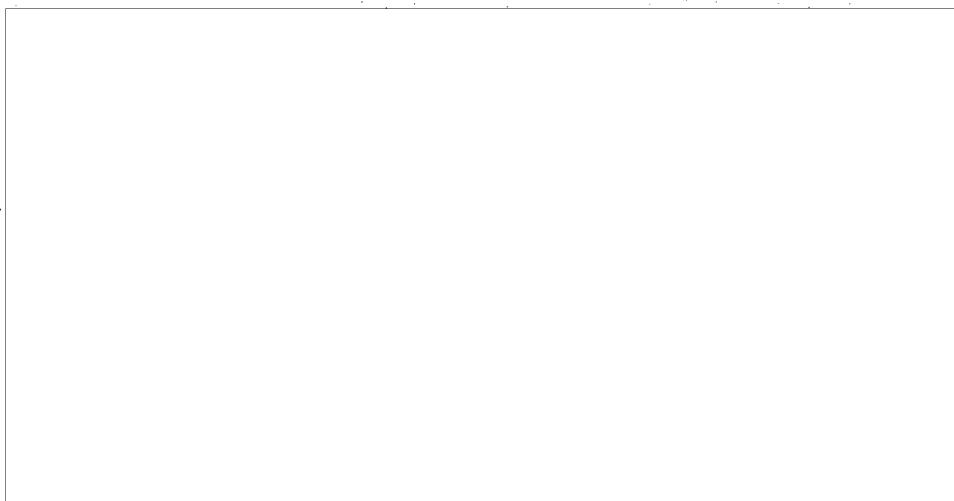


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MIDDLE EAST



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EUROPE

A political crisis in Italy was precipitated yesterday by Pietro Nenni's resignation as leader of the Socialist Party. A growing split in Socialist Party ranks, which more conservative party members claim arose over the question of cooperation with the Communists, apparently led to Nenni's decision to resign. Although he has retained thus far his position as foreign minister, several right-wing Socialist Party members are said to have resigned their posts in the cabinet.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

CHINA

The explanation of the Nationalist raid off the mainland coast, as given to Ambassador McConaughy by Vice Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, is that it was a small-scale probing action designed to test the Communists' coastal defenses as well as to boost the morale of the specialized personnel who carried out the mission. The operation had no military objective, and the three boats said to have been lost by the Communists were of no military value.

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ARGENTINA

Acting under the state of siege imposed last Monday, police have arrested more than 300 labor officials, students, lawyers, and opposition politicians. The interior minister has said publicly that leftist labor leaders--the main target of the crackdown--would be released only "when tensions subside."

The unrest of the past two months probably has convinced the Onganía government that it is futile at this time to continue negotiations with the unions for political support. The death of labor chief Augusto Vandor, one of the key figures in the negotiations, will make it even more difficult to renew the dialogue.

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